Sample Peer Editing Exercise: Structure of Argument (15-20 minutes and then switch)

Name (writer)_____

Name (reader)_____

Writer, check each off as it is completed for your draft. You may run out of time; we want to know how far you got in the exercise. What you don't complete, you may want to complete with a Writing Center tutor.

To the Writer:

Underline your thesis statement and all topic sentences. Underline the most important sentence in your concluding paragraph (this should be the sentence that answers the question, "So What?" the best).

_____Transpose these sentences onto a separate sheet of paper, constructing, in essence, a skeletal outline of your paper's argument.

Leave space between the topic sentences.

_____In a phrase, summarize the content of each body paragraph. What is the paragraph about? What is it addressing? Write these phrases on the separate sheet of paper under the topic sentences.

To the Reader:

Read aloud your peer's paper. As you do so, stop and do a "think aloud" when you think you can tell the writer your interpretation of what you are reading. Try, "I think you are saying…" "To summarize your idea here…" Be sure to also raise questions and point out confusion. "I am not sure what that sentence means…do you mean this or that?" "I wonder X."

_____At the end of the introduction, paraphrase the thesis and the problem/issue the paper is addressing (the purpose of the paper).

_____At the end of each paragraph, stop to do a summary in a phrase of what that paragraph was about. Write this in the margin.

_____When you finish the conclusion, state how the author addressed the "so what?" question or the implications/consequences of the argument.

To the Writer:

While the reader is "thinking aloud" make notes on your skeletal outline. How does what the reader said match what you wrote on your outline? Where are you not clear? Where does the reader need more support?

_____End the session by thanking your reader and letting him/her know how you plan to revise using what you learned from his/her reading.